

The Deer and the Lighthouse



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Daisy the deer lived in a forest of tall green trees. She had soft russet-brown fur with white spots along her back, and a sea-blue scarf tied around her neck. Every morning she watched the sun rise and wondered what lay beyond the hills. 'Have you ever seen the ocean?' she asked her friend Finn the gull. Finn wore a tiny red sailor's cap and always had a cheerful answer.



'The ocean is the biggest, bluest thing you can imagine!' Finn said, flapping his grey wings. 'I fly over it every day. Come with me and I'll show you!' Daisy's big brown eyes grew wide with excitement. She grabbed her little satchel and followed Finn through the forest. They walked and walked until the trees began to thin.



At last they reached the shore. Daisy gasped. The ocean stretched out before her like a sparkling blue blanket. Waves rolled in and out with a soft hush-hush sound. 'It's even bigger than I dreamed!' she whispered. Finn perched on a rock and puffed out his white chest. 'Welcome to the sea, Daisy!' he said. They stood together, watching the gulls wheel and call.



Just beyond the beach, a tall white lighthouse stood on a rocky point. Its red stripes glowed in the afternoon sun. 'What's that?' Daisy asked. 'That's the lighthouse,' Finn said. 'It keeps ships safe at night. But I see no light shining today.' They walked closer and heard someone muttering from the door. 'Oh dear, oh dear,' said a voice.



An old man stood in the lighthouse doorway. He had a bushy white beard, a thick navy sweater, and eyes that squinted in the sunlight. 'Hello,' said Daisy shyly. 'I'm Daisy, and this is Finn. Are you the lighthouse keeper?' The man nodded. 'I'm Keeper Oakley, and I've lost my spectacles! Without them, I can't see to make the light shine!'



'The evening fog is coming,' Finn said, looking at the dark clouds over the water. 'The ships need the light!' Keeper Oakley looked worried. 'I've searched everywhere,' he sighed. 'My round spectacles are gone, and I can't find them without my spectacles!' Daisy took a deep breath. 'Don't worry,' she said. 'Finn and I will help you find them!'



They started searching right away. Finn flew up to the top of the lighthouse and looked on every ledge. Daisy checked around the door and under the steps. 'I found a shell and a rusty key,' she called, 'but no glasses!' Keeper Oakley sat on a bench and scratched his bald head. 'I had them this morning when I fed the gulls,' he said.



'Let's think,' said Finn, landing beside Daisy. 'Where did you go after you fed the gulls?' Keeper Oakley rubbed his beard. 'I walked down to the water to check the rocks,' he said. 'Then I came back and made tea.' Daisy's ears perked up. 'Maybe they fell somewhere along the path!' she said. 'Let's follow your steps exactly.'



Daisy and Finn retraced the keeper's path. They walked down the rocky trail toward the waves. Finn flew low, scanning the ground with his sharp dark eyes. Daisy looked under bushes and between stones. The fog was creeping closer, turning the air soft and grey. 'We have to hurry,' Finn said. 'The ships will need the light soon!'



They reached the water's edge. The tide was coming in, and waves splashed over the rocks. 'Look there!' cried Daisy. A pair of round spectacles lay on a flat rock, just above the water. But the waves were getting bigger. Daisy carefully stepped closer, her slender legs trembling. 'I can reach them!' she said. She stretched her neck and gently picked up the glasses.



Daisy carried the spectacles back up the path as fast as she could. Finn flew ahead, calling, 'We found them! We found them!' Keeper Oakley stood up, his squinting eyes bright with hope. 'You found my glasses!' he said. He put them on and smiled a huge, warm smile. 'Now I can see everything clearly. You two are wonderful!'



Keeper Oakley hurried up the lighthouse stairs. Daisy and Finn followed close behind. At the top, he set himself in front of the great lamp. 'Let's make the light shine!' he said. He lit the lamp, and the beam burst out, bright and golden. It swept over the waves in a wide, warm circle. The evening fog rolled in, but the light glowed through it, safe and steady.



From the top of the lighthouse, Daisy looked out at the ocean. The beam turned slowly, lighting the grey fog and the dark water. 'It's beautiful,' she whispered. Finn perched on the railing beside her. 'You helped save the ships,' he said. Daisy felt warm inside. She had never done anything so important before. The sea felt like a friend now, too.



Keeper Oakley gave them each a warm cup of cocoa. 'You are welcome here anytime,' he said. 'The lighthouse is always open to friends.' Daisy wrapped her blue scarf tighter and smiled. She was glad she had been brave. She was glad she had a friend like Finn. And she was glad the ocean was now part of her world.



As the stars came out, Daisy and Finn sat on the rocks and listened to the waves. 'I thought the ocean would be scary,' Daisy said. 'But it's not. Not with you.' Finn cocked his head. 'Friends help each other explore,' he said. 'That's what friends are for.' Daisy nodded. She knew she would never forget this day.



Daisy returned to the forest, but she came back to the shore often. She and Finn visited Keeper Oakley and watched the lighthouse beam glow over the waves. The ocean became Daisy's favorite place. She learned that new worlds are not so scary when you have a friend beside you. And every evening, the light shone bright and safe, thanks to two friends who cared.